

IN THE REALM OF THE RING LORDS

*To maintain its
persecution of the
Grail dynasts and
heretics, the Church
made sure it
subverted the
stories that would
keep the true Grail
legacy alive among
the people.*

Part 1 of 2

by Sir Laurence Gardner,
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It seems like hardly any time since I was here. It's only ten months ago, I guess, but in the past few months *Genesis of the Grail Kings* has been completed, published and is already making a significant impact in Britain, with launches now taking place further afield.

Duncan has asked me to begin by giving some background about myself once again. I am involved with a number of organisations—the Celtic Church being one in particular, for which I'm the Grand Prior in Britain [that is, the Celtic Church of the Sacred Kindred of St Columba]. Not necessarily that the established Church organisations like the Celtic movement very much, but that's the way of it. I am also appointed as a Presidential Attaché to an organisation called The European Council of Princes.

The Council was founded in 1946, directly after the War, and the object was fairly straightforward. (In fact, some of the financing actually came from this country [Australia], and a lot from America as well). It was at a time when there was a tremendous fear about the build-up of further extremist right-wing factions, and there was also the fear that the communist left-wing might take a hold in Europe. It was decided, therefore, to set up a watchdog committee called The International Council of Government, whose brief was to keep an eye on the extreme political factions. As it transpired, it didn't have very much to keep an eye on and, once the European Common Market came into being, it became much more involved with that from the 1960s. The Council quite liked the idea of the trading agreements and the general mutuality, although it doesn't like things too much in the way they have now developed within the European Union.

About ten years ago, the Council changed its name to become The European Council of Princes. With the eventual establishment of the European Parliament, there could hardly be a Council of Government as well. In fact, the Council was not a government at all: it was simply an advisory body consisting of thirty-three European royal houses. These might be reigning houses, dispossessed houses or deposed houses but, whatever the case, various princes and princesses of these families formed the Council. For the longest time now, their objective has been a fairly simple one, and that is to look after the constitutional clauses within the various nation states (European countries, with the exception of Britain, have Written Constitutions). And so, when the European Parliament decides to enact this new law or impose that new dictate, the Council of Princes is able to say, "Look, you can't actually do that because it contravenes, say, clause 7 in subsection (b) of the Constitution of this or that country".

The Council of Princes is not especially political—it is more of a social Council in practice; and I am appointed as an Attaché by virtue of the fact that its President since 1992 has been HRH Prince Michael of Albany, the current heir to the Royal House of Stuart—the House that was deposed in Britain from 1688.

The House of Stuart, having taken over the presidency of the Council from the House of Habsburg-Austria, related it to its one-time Royal Academy, which was a very scientific establishment. In fact, in the 1700s in particular, it was highly Rosicrucian—very scientific and alchemical. From the time of Robert the Bruce, the Chancellor of that organisation was given the title Prince Saint Germain. This title had little to do with the 5th-century saint himself (except indirectly), but it had to do ultimately with the Stuart Royal Court in France, at the Palace of Saint Germain.

The Chancellor title was changed in the 1700s to Count Saint Germain, and in the 1890s it was changed again to become Chevalier Saint Germain. My present title is that of Chevalier Saint Germain—which is where the knighthood comes from. As distinct

from an English knighthood, mine is a Franco-Scot distinction attached to the Stuart Royal Court of France [as ratified by King Louis XIV in 1692], in the key Noble Order of the Royal Palace of Saint Germain-en-Laye, near Paris.

Being a Stuart supporter, I am not really a great fan of the House of Hanover, as you know. However, I have now become attached to a particular Hanoverian establishment. The oldest antiquarian society in the world, constituted by the House of Hanover [by charter of King George III of Britain] in the middle 1700s, is an association called the Society of Antiquaries which, in Scotland, forms an adjunct to Historic Scotland—a Government department. Well, as a non-fan of the House of Hanover, I was privileged and delighted a few months ago to be made a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland—so it rather looks as if I've been blessed to have a little bit of a foot in the establishment's academic camp.

Now, back to where we are today. I have to begin of course by thanking Duncan and the NEXUS team for affording me the opportunity to link my first Australian visit for the new book, *Genesis of the Grail Kings*, with the NEXUS Conference. And I would like to thank those of you who, since I was last here, have written to me. Some of you may have had a reply by now; my correspondence was more or less up to date around Christmas, but it has fallen behind again. So, if you're still waiting, please bear with me; I will respond.

I first began to talk publicly about the subject matter of *Genesis of the Grail Kings* back in October 1997 and, indeed, we covered a good deal of related ground at the NEXUS Conference last July. So, with the book now completed and published, I guess the time has come to move on to other things in preparation for future works.

Originally, and beginning with *Bloodline of the Holy Grail*, I had planned for a series of three books on the Grail theme, covering some 6,000 years of Messianic inheritance from the time of Adam, through King David and Jesus, down to the present day. However, in the course of compiling this genealogical descent and its fascinating history, the concept for another book has arisen. This has come about more by popular demand than by strategic planning, and I have become so enthused with the idea that there will now be four books in this particular series. It is, in fact, about this fourth book (rather than the immediate *Genesis* successor) that I would like to speak today.

Bloodline of the Holy Grail covers a historical period from the time of Jesus through the past 2,000 years. Subsequently, *Genesis of the Grail Kings* was written to answer the most asked of all resultant readers' questions: Why was the Grail Bloodline so important in the first place? Why was the kingly line which descended to Jesus and beyond so unique from the outset in old Mesopotamian times?

This was the subject which we discussed here last year, and we saw how the Messianic succession of Grail dynasts (or Dragon Kings) was alchemically conceived and purpose-bred for the role of earthly leadership. We looked at the records of ancient Sumer, which talked of the Anunnaki gods and their "creation chamber". We saw how the great vulcans of the era produced the enigmatic Highward Fire-stone (the white powder of monatomic gold) that

was used to feed the Light-bodies of the Babylonian Kings and Egyptian Pharaohs. And we saw how this substance, when ingested, had stunning effects on the body's endocrinal system. Ultimately, we followed the senior line of royal descent (a line that was genetically determined by the mitochondrial DNA of the Dragon Queens) down to the time of Moses. And we visited the Temple, discovered in 1904, high on the Bible's Mount Horeb, where the monatomic fire-stone was made.

Now we shall take a look at the wider scheme of things, in terms of the folklore and fable which have emanated from the alchemical realm of the Pendragons. And we shall consider, in particular, the longstanding disputes which have prevailed between the sacred Bloodline and the Church establishment. These stories and their historical roots (whether portrayed in fairy tale, nursery rhyme or Gothic romance) will form the basis of a forthcoming book, entitled *Ring Lords of the Dragon: Beyond the Portal of the Twilight Realm*.

So, today, we shall be looking at the world of enchantment, with a little myth, a little magic and a good deal of historical fact, as some of the characters of popular legend take their place on the stage of reality. And, at the conclusion of this talk, we shall open the door to one of the most intriguing, but suppressed, secrets of our heritage.

On the face of it, the Grail-related stories (whether of Cinderella, Robin Hood, Sleeping Beauty or Count Dracula) each

hold their separate mysteries and enchantments, but it is not generally understood that they all stem from a common historical base which is rooted in the culture of the Grail Kings. Even though some of the themes have their origins in very old lore, the majority of tales (as we know them) were newly slanted from the Dark Ages onwards, and especially from mediaeval times when the Church's persecution of Grail heretics was in full swing, leading to the Catholic Inquisitions.

Among the best known of these heterodox Christians (or "heretics") in the Middle Ages were the Cathars, the Pure Ones of the Languedoc region in southern France. And they, in line with the Dragon tradition of the Ouroboros Ring Lords, referred to the Messianic Bloodline as the Elven Race. As we shall see, the terms "elf", "fairy", "pixie" and the like were all representative of various castes within the kingly succession.

The Ouroboros (as detailed in *Genesis of the Grail Kings*) was a symbol of wholeness, unity and eternity, usually identified by a serpent (in the form of a ring) clutching its own tail. With a cross positioned beneath the ring, the emblem becomes the familiar device of the female—the Venus symbol (as portrayed on the cover of *Genesis of the Grail Kings*). Alternatively, with a cross positioned above the ring, it becomes the masculine Orb of sovereign regalia. And with the cross positioned within the ring, it becomes emblematic of the Holy Grail itself—identified as the Dew Cup, or the *Rosi-crucis*.

In the Cathar language of old Provence, a female elf was an *albi* (*elbe* or *ylbi*), and Albi was the name given to the main Cathar centre in Languedoc. This was in deference to the matrilinear heritage of the Grail dynasty, for the Cathars were supporters of the original *Albi-gens*—the Elven Bloodline which had descended through the Dragon Queens of yore, such as Lilith, Miriam,

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Bathsheba and Mary Magdalene. It was for this reason that, when Simon de Montfort and the armies of Pope Innocent III descended upon the region in 1209, it was called the Albigensian Crusade. Through some 35 years, tens of thousands of innocent people were slaughtered in this brutal campaign—all because the inhabitants of the region were champions of the original concept of Grail kingship, as against the pseudo-style of monarchy which had been implemented by the papal machine.

In practical terms, Church kingship prevailed from the 8th century and it has continued through the ages to the present day. But the fact is that, under the strict terms of sovereign practice, all such monarchies and their affiliated governments have been illegitimate.

So, what is Church kingship? It is precisely that with which we have become so familiar. It applies to all monarchs who achieve their regnal positions as a result of Church coronation—by the Pope, or, in Britain, by the Archbishop of Canterbury. In terms of true kingship, there is no necessity for coronation because kingly and queenly inheritance are, and always were, "in the blood"—to be precise, in the mitochondrial DNA of the *Sangréal*.

In the old scheme of things, kingship was automatic because it was an alchemical inheritance which, in practice, had nothing to do with ruling over anyone or anywhere. By virtue of an illegal dictate, however, monarchies were brought under Church control and the magical Realm of the Ring Lords was supplanted by the material and territorial reigns of the papal kings.

One might ask why this was allowed to happen. Why did no one stand up for the legacy of the Holy Grail? Well, the fact is, they did; the Cathars did, the Knights Templars did, the Rosicrucians did. Indeed, any number of gnostic groups and fraternities did, and it was this open support which led to the hideous tortures and executions of the papal Inquisitions and witch-hunts that persisted through so many generations.

By the Middle Ages, the Church controlled the majority of European monarchies (with Scotland a notable exception, as a result of which King Robert the Bruce and the whole Scottish nation were excommunicated). The Church, therefore, influenced governments, parliaments and educational establishments (as it still does today). And, by implication if not by direct instruction, the military forces of the pseudo-kings operated at Church command.

The Church held such enormous financial, political and military power that the Grail adherents became an "underground stream", living in fear of their lives at every turn. They were not only heretics: they were singled out for punishment as sorcerers and necromancers. And since they did not conform to papal dictates, they were clearly Satanists! The women, of course, were all whores, but this was nothing new; the Roman Church had forged this dogmatic classification at the time of its earliest constitution!

Before looking at some aspects of the Ring legacy, it is important to consider the original document which made Church kingship possible in the first place. In this context, I do not use the word "important" lightly, because the implementation of this particular document some 1,248 years ago led to just about every social injustice that has since been experienced in the Christian world. The document to which I refer is called "The

Donation of Constantine". All monarchical and governmental practice has, for centuries, been based upon the initial precept of this charter but, as we shall see, the precept is wholly invalid.

There are those in our midst today who, under the dynastic rule of Grail entitlement, are rightful kings and queens. But many of the dynasties which have actually reigned have done so with little or no sovereign heritage. They have gained their positions simply because it suited the Church to crown them as its puppet representatives.

Moving forwards in history from the Pharaohs of Egypt, the Davidic Kings of Judah and the Dragon Kings of Scythia, we arrive in the Dark Ages with the Celtic kingdoms of Europe and, essentially for the purposes of this story, with the Fisher Kings in Gaul (which later became France).

It is because of this continuing period of Grail sovereignty in the Celtic realms that conventional history now refers to the "Dark Ages"—about which, we are told, there is so little documentary record. There is, however, any amount of surviving material from the era. The period is only "dark" because the Church and the imperial overlords decided to veil it from scrutiny, removing documentary evidence from the educational environment in order to

perpetuate the myth that everyone and everything outside the Roman establishment was ignorant and barbaric.

As detailed in *Bloodline of the Holy Grail*, the Church of Rome (founded by Emperor Constantine the Great in the 4th century) had little to do with the Nazarene style of Christianity which it officially superseded and had hitherto persecuted. It was an entirely new, hybrid form of male-dominated "churchianity" based upon a contrived apostolic succession of popes.

The separate Nazarene movement (often called the Celtic Church) continued in opposition under the direction of Grail dynasts from the family of Jesus, and they were styled the *Desposyni*, meaning Heirs of the Lord.

At that time, the Bloodline houses of the *Desposyni* held the reins of Dragon kingship in Europe. But the bishops of the Roman Church sought to undermine this tradition, and eventually managed this in the 8th century when they deposed the Merovingian Fisher Kings of the Franks after some 300 years of regnal succession.

With the sudden, contrived demise of this Grail dynasty in 751, a new style of kingship was introduced in the West—kingship not by any right of succession, but by individual decree of the Pope—and it was this which led to much of the fairy tale and folklore which is so familiar today. The new style of papal kingship was made possible by the so-called "Donation of Constantine" which, although now known to have been forged, was not open to debate at the time.

When the Donation made its first appearance in the middle 8th century, it was alleged to have been written by Emperor Constantine 400 years earlier (although, strangely, never produced in the interim). It was even dated and carried his supposed signature. What the document proclaimed was that the Pope was Christ's elected representative on Earth, with the power to "create" kings as his subordinates. The provisions were put into operation by the Vatican in 751, whereupon the longstanding Merovingians

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were deposed and a whole new dynasty was supplemented by way of a family who had hitherto been mayors of the Royal Palace (the equivalent of prime ministers). They were dubbed "Carolingians", and their only king of any consequence (through some 236 years) was the legendary Charlemagne.

As a result of this strategy, the whole nature of monarchy changed from being an office of "guardianship" to one of "rule". Henceforth, the papal monarchs were territorial governors rather than patriarchs of the people. By virtue of this monumental change, the longstanding Grail Code of princely service was forsaken and European kings became servants of the Church—which had the power to make them or break them.

How do we know today that the Donation is a forgery? Well, there are many reasons, but the most obvious is that its New Testament references relate to the Latin Vulgate version of the Bible. This edition was translated and compiled by St Jerome who was not born until the year 340, some 26 years after Constantine (who died, anyway, in 337) supposedly signed the document! Indeed, there was more than half a century between Constantine's alleged signing and the appearance of the particular Latin Bible that was used in its content. Notwithstanding this, the language of the Donation was, in any event, that of the 8th century and bore no relation to the writing style of Constantine's day.

The truly ridiculous aspect of all this is that the Donation was proved to be a forgery some 550 years ago, during the Renaissance, but its overwhelming dictate, which cemented the Pope as the supreme spiritual and temporal head of Christendom, has prevailed regardless.

As explained in *Genesis of the Grail Kings*, the monarchs of the Grail succession were called Messiahs (Anointed Ones) because, in the early days in Mesopotamia and Egypt, they were anointed with the fat of the sacred *Messeh* (the holy dragon or crocodile). By virtue of this, they were also

called Dragons. The Dragon, emblematic of wisdom, was the epitome of the Holy Spirit which, according to the Book of Genesis, moved upon the waters of time, while the Grail was the perpetual Blood Royal—the *Sangréal*. Originally, in old Mesopotamia, it was called the *Gra-al*—the Sacred Blood of the Dragon Queens—and it was said to be the "nectar of supreme excellence". The ancient Greeks called it *ambrosia*.

The concept of fairies (the fair folk) was born directly from this base, being a derivative of "fey" and relating especially to "fate". In the Celtic world, certain royal families (especially those of the Pendragons, or Head Dragons) were said to carry the Fairy Blood—that is to say, the fate or destiny of the Grail Bloodline—while the Elf Maidens of the *Albi-gens* were the designated guardians of the Earth, starlight and forest.

But how was it that the dragons, fairies and elves of history became enveloped within a shroud of supernatural enigma? Why was it that their stories were moved from the world of reality into a domain of romance and nursery tale? What had all this to do with the Donation of Constantine?

To answer these questions, we must now step through the Portal of Enchantment into the Twilight Realm of the Shining Ones, for theirs is the enlightened Realm of the Ring Lords.

*Three Rings for the Elven Kings under the sky.
Seven for the Dwarf Lords in their halls of stone.
Nine for Mortal Men doomed to die.
One for the Dark Lord on his dark throne,
In the Land of Mordor where the shadows lie.
One Ring to rule them all.
One Ring to find them.
One Ring to bring them all
And in the darkness bind them,
In the Land of Mordor where the shadows lie.*

So it is cited by Gandalf the Wizard in Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings*, one of the most popular tales of all time.

In essence, the contested ownership of the One Ring is little different to the enduring quest for the Holy Grail. Although presented from quite opposite standpoints, both are quests for the maintenance of sovereignty, but each has been misapplied at various stages of history by those who perceived the Ring and the Grail as power weapons. Hence, it was imperative (in the respective stories) that access to the Grail was protected by severe questions, just as it was essential to keep the One Ring from the evil Sauron of Mordor, who eventually lost his power when the Ring was destroyed in the fires of the Mount of Doom.

There is, however, an essential difference between Tolkien's One Ring, which is portrayed as dark and divisive, and the

Golden Ring of Grail romance, which is a ring of love and enlightenment. The latter was further symbolised by the ring of iron-clad knights who sat at the Round Table—a ring that was broken (leading the land into chaos and waste) when Arthur forsook the Celtic Code in favour of the Roman persuasion (or, as the later Christianised version of the story differently explains, when Guinevere was unfaithful to Arthur with Lancelot).

It has been said on occasions that the great genius of 19th-century composer Richard Wagner was that he recognised the Ring saga as a version of the Grail Quest. However, if anything, the reverse

is true. What he recognised was that the popular Holy Grail legends were, in fact, stylised retellings of the more traditional Ring Quest.

Both Richard Wagner and Alfred, Lord Tennyson (in his Arthurian writings) understood that the Grail Quest was a spiritual aspect of the Ring Quest, but that in essence they were alike, if not the same. What they also recognised was the fact that both the Ring and the Grail could bring disaster, though by different means. The power of the Ring had to be withstood, otherwise it would enslave its master, whereas the power of the Grail would retaliate with vengeance if misused. Either way, the moral is the same in that, ultimately, power is self-destructive when achieved through selling one's soul. Hence, the Ouroboros Ring can be a halo or a crown, but it can equally become a noose.

Adolf Hitler's fanatical obsession with finding the Hallows of Grail Castle was a prime example of this misconceived notion of power. In his search for the Hallows, he obtained an ancient lance (said to have been used by Charlemagne) which he insisted was the Longinus spear that pierced the side of Jesus at the Crucifixion. This, he reckoned, was the sacred Spear of Destiny, so revered in Grail lore. With this in his possession, Hitler was confident that his empire would be as strong as that of

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Charlemagne. But legend had it that, after many great victories, Charlemagne was doomed to defeat from the moment he lost the magical weapon. And so it was that on 30 April 1945—the very day when the American 7th Army, under General Patton, seized the lance from Nuremberg Castle—Adolf Hitler accepted his defeat and [apparently] shot himself.

Whether applied in fact or fantasy, the concept of the Ring and the Grail was such that it inspired hope for the social and natural environments. The Grail Hallows (the Sword, Chalice, Ouroboros and Spear) were traditionally regarded as tools of princely service but, when presumed to be weapons of power, they would always, one way or another, destroy the wielder from within. These Hallows were represented in the four suits of the Tarot's Minor Arcana as the Swords, Cups, Pentacles and Wands—subsequently to become the Spades, Hearts, Diamonds and Clubs that we know today.

Throughout the best part of this millennium, no organisation has misused the Grail Chalice symbolism to greater effect than the Christian Church establishment. From the earliest times, the *Rosi-crucis* (the chalice and wine of the Grail sacrament) was a prerogative of the *Albi-gens*, being emblematic of the Blood Royal in the womb of the Dragon Queen. However, the Church has long misappropriated this aspect of the Hallows ceremony to become its Eucharistic power-weapon, supposedly to bind its followers into communion with ecclesiastical dogma. But, as time goes by, this very power is being seen to subside as the congregations diminish in the quest for greater truths and more substantial enlightenment from legitimate sources.

In William Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, the Queen of the Fairies is Titania, whose name represents the pre-Olympian god-race of the Titans. In particular, she is the Moon Goddess Diana. Their king, Oberon, however, had an historical base, being inspired by an ancestor of Shakespeare's colleague Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford. He was a founding member of Elizabeth Tudor's 16th-century Court Poetry and Magic Syndicate—along with Francis Bacon, John Dee, Edmund Spenser and others of the Rosicrucian "underground stream" who aided and guided much of Shakespeare's work.

Edward de Vere was, at that time, Lord Chancellor of England—as had been many generations of his forebears, including Albrey, the 12th-century Prince of Anjou and Guisnes, whose titular name, *Albe-Righ*, meant Elf King. What the Syndicate knew full well, despite their loyalty to Elizabeth, was that the House of Tudor had no prior right to the English throne, having simply taken it, by might of the sword, from the preceding House of Plantagenet.

That apart, the Plantagenets themselves were a junior branch of the House of Anjou, whose senior branch was the House of Vere. Indeed, in 1861, the noted royal historian Baron Thomas Babington Macaulay described the Veres as "the longest and most illustrious line of nobles that England has ever seen". Their ancestry was jointly Pictish and Merovingian, descending from the ancient Grail House of Scythia. Here was a true kingly line of the Elven Race, and it was for this reason that Oberon (a variant of Aubrey/Albrey, the historical Elf King) became Shakespeare's

King of the Fairies. Such was the translatory nature of all Rosicrucian symbology, whether portrayed in stories, artwork, watermarks or the Tarot.

Some time earlier, in 1408, Edward de Vere's ancestor, Richard (Lord Chamberlain and 11th Earl of Oxford), had been invested as a Knight of the Garter by King Henry IV at Windsor Castle. Also invested at the same time was King Sigismund of Hungary, who had revived the ancient Egyptian Order of the Dragon—within which Richard de Vere held the hereditary distinction of Lord Draconis.

One way or another, the nursery tales which emanated from the "underground stream" were stories of lost brides and usurped kingship—based upon the subjugation of the Grail Bloodline by the Church of Rome and, in later times, by the sectarian Puritans of the Protestant movement. The Catholics had their Dominican Grand Inquisitor, Tomàs de Torquemada, and the Puritans had their equivalent in Matthew Hopkins, the Witchfinder-General. Favoured executions, in each case, were hanging, drowning or burning at the stake, and the common command was: "Kill them all—God will know his own!"

The fairy tale concept was essentially geared to stories relating

to these persecutions: allegorical accounts of the predicament of the true Royal Family—the Ring Lords of the *Sangréal*, whose fairies and elves (having been manoeuvred from the mortal plane of orthodoxy and status quo) were confined to a seemingly Otherworld existence.

They were tales of Grail Princes who were turned into frogs, of Swan Knights who roamed the wasteland, and of Dragon Princesses locked in towers or put to sleep for hundreds of years. In the course of their persecution, the Elf Maidens were pricked with bodkins, fed with poisoned

apples or condemned to servitude—while their champions swam great lakes, battled through thickets and scaled mighty towers to secure and protect the matrilinear heritage of the *Albi-gens*. They include such well-known stories as *Sleeping Beauty*, *Cinderella*, *Snow White* and *Rapunzel*.

In all cases, the underlying theme is the same, with the Bloodline Princess kept (through drugging, imprisonment or some form of restraint) out of reach of the Grail Prince who has to find and release her in order to preserve the dynasty and perpetuate the line. For the most part, the establishment of the "Mother Church" was symbolised by a malevolent stepmother, an evil witch or some other jealous female with an opposing vested interest. Always, the stories are reminiscent of the Lost Bride of the King in the Old Testament's Song of Solomon. Their content also embodies the forlorn aspect of Mary Magdalene, the bride of Jesus, whose royal heritage and maternal legacy were so thoroughly undermined by the Christian bishops.

An interesting feature of many classic fairy tales is that they truly are very old stories. Take *Cinderella*, for example. If asked who wrote *Cinderella*, many people would answer that it was the Brothers Grimm, while others would say it was Charles Perrault. However, these men were not actually writers of fairy tales, as is commonly thought. They were collectors, compilers and interpreters of the tales. The story of *Cinderella* can be traced back to the Carolingian era, with its first known version appearing in the year 850. Perrault published his well-known edition in 1697 in

France, while Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm produced their German version in 1812.

Over the years, many people have likened Tolkien's wizard, Gandalf, to Merlin of the Arthurian tales. At the same time, Tolkien's Aragorn has been likened to King Arthur but, as Tolkien himself pointed out, there is really a closer similarity between Aragorn and the historical Charlemagne.

The challenge which faced Charlemagne, who had been charged by the Church to establish a viable Empire from various disunited kingdoms, was not unlike that which confronted Aragorn, who reunited the divided kingdoms of Middle Earth. But there was a marked difference in practice, for Aragorn was far more like Arthur in having an advisory wizard, whereas Charlemagne did not because the Church would not consent to counsellors outside its own appointees.

Aragorn's was therefore more of a Celtic-style environment, with the enemy being the evil Sauron. Charlemagne, on the other hand, was a champion of the Roman Church whose adversaries were the supporters of the unlawfully ousted Merovingian establishment—an establishment to which Aragorn would personally have been well suited.

In the event, it became essential for the Church to settle some form of Ring entitlement upon Charlemagne so that he was perceived to conform to the Dragon tradition. And so a suitable tale was invented to the effect that a serpent appeared at his court with a golden ring in its mouth—an enchanted ring that compelled him to love whoever's finger it was on.

At this stage, it is of interest to note that a newly proposed three-film series of Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* is currently in its early stages of development. After some 18 months of negotiation with the American film company Newline Cinema, the \$260-million contract has been acquired by New Zealand film-maker Peter Jackson.

Various parts of New Zealand will apparently make ideal Middle Earth locations for the project, and it is hoped that the first film (based upon Book I of Tolkien's 1950s trilogy) will be released within the next couple of years. This film, *The Fellowship of the Ring*, will subsequently be followed by *The Two Towers* and *The Return of the King*.

With a speaking cast of about sixty and many thousands of extras, it has recently been rumoured that one of the key roles, that of Gandalf, is hotly tipped for Sean Connery. Given that *The Lord of the Rings* has been voted "the most popular book of the century", and with stars of this calibre, we could well be looking at one of the first mammoth box-office attractions of the new millennium.

The composer Richard Wagner's personal association with Grail lore and, of course, his own famous *Ring Cycle* are well known. It is therefore very appropriate that one of the present hopeful contenders for *The Lord of the Rings* film score is Richard Wagner's own descendant, Adrian Wagner, who is now in touch with the film company in this regard.

When *Bloodline of the Holy Grail* was released, I was heartened to learn that the Wagner Grail tradition of Lohengrin and Parsifal was still very much to the fore. At that time, in parallel with my book, Adrian Wagner released an album called *The Holy Spirit and the Holy Grail*. Now, as a companion to my latest

work, he has composed the compelling musical suite, *Genesis of the Grail Kings*. [See Audio Reviews, this issue. Ed.]

One apparent fact about Tolkien's elven folk is that, unlike the cute little elves of many children's tales, these characters are actually larger and more powerful than average mortals. They are also endowed with greater powers of wisdom, they ride magical horses and closely resemble the ancient Irish king-tribe of the *Tuatha Dé Danann*. In this regard, Tolkien was quite accurate with his assessment of the original Ring Lords of the *Albi-gens* who, in the far distant years BC, were called the Lords of the *Sidhé* (pronounced "shee").

The *Sidhé* was a transcendent intellect, known to the Druids as the Web of the Wise, while "druid" (*druidhe*) was itself a Celtic word for "witch"—an English form of the Saxon verb *wicca*, meaning "to bend" or "to yield" (as indeed do willow and wicker).

The *Tuatha Dé Danann* (or Dragon Lords of *Anu*) were masters of the transcendent *Sidhé*, and were duly classified as "fates" or "fairies". Before settling in Ireland (from about 800 BC), they were the world's most noble race, alongside the early Kings of Egypt, being the Black Sea Princes of Scythia (now Ukraine). Like the original dynastic Pharaohs, they traced their descent from the great Pendragons of Mesopotamia; and from them sprang the kingly lines of the Irish *Bruithnigh* and the Picts of Scotland's Caledonia. In Wales they founded the Royal House of Gwynedd, while in Cornwall in the southwest of England, they were the sacred gentry known as the *Pict-sidhé*—from which derives the term "pixie".

So, from a single caste of the original Blood Royal—whether known as the *Sangréal*, the *Albi-gens* or the Ring Lords—we discover many of the descriptive terms which sit at the very heart of popular folklore. For here, in this one noble race, we have the "elves", "fairies" and "pixies"—not beguiling little folk, but distinguished Kings and Queens of the Dragon

succession.

One of the most important Scythian words was *uper*, which meant "over" or "above"—a word that we still use in today's English in such definitions as "superintendent" or "supervisor". In titular form, a Scythian *Uper* was an Overseer or, more importantly, an Overlord—the equivalent of a Pendragon. Later, in the Hungarian and Romanian regions, the word gained the variant form, *Oupire*.

Until the mediaeval fabrications of the Christian Church, there was nothing remotely sinister or supernatural about the definition of *Oupire*, but this was eventually destined to change when the witch-hunts began, for the priestly/kingly *Oupires* were, in the eyes of Rome, the equivalent of Magian Druids. They were therefore witches, and the *Sidhé* definition (Web of the Wise) became newly dubbed as "the Web of the Weird".

In the main, outside the Celtic regions of Britain, the traditional *Oupires* had been apparent in the Balkan and Carpathian regions of Europe, having prevailed from Transylvania to the Black Sea in ancient times. They were therefore not only associated with witches but with Gypsies. The Church bishops and Inquisitional friars suspected them of being the ultimate rulers of the Land of

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Elphane—the twilight realm of fairy gold, magic springs and the abiding lore of the Greenwood, all of which were anathema to the Church. They were said to be wandering people of the night, who consorted with evil spirits. At that stage, a new word was born into the language of Christian Europe. The word, a straightforward corruption of *Oupire*, was "vampire".

In addition to vampires, another classification was soon to enter the Inquisitional vocabulary as the Dominican Black Friars and the Franciscan Grey Friars compiled their lists of undesirables. They had now moved beyond the realm of ordinary heretics and pagans, for alongside their fabricated vampire myth they conjured another form of shapeshifting phenomenon: the werewolf.

Quite suddenly, there appeared to be no end to the fantastic creatures that were reckoned to stalk the streets and forests in search of unsuspecting victims. But the beauty of all this was that it had the effect of making people lean more heavily upon the Church—the only perceived route to salvation. These vampires and were-

wolves, it was said, could not be killed by conventional means. Even God was out of the picture, for only the power of Jesus Christ (the Saviour of humankind) could defeat these diabolical beings. They were portrayed as devils, demons and emissaries of Satan, who had to be exorcised and destroyed by the monks and clerics. And so the Church was in business with a whole new genre of scary folklore to counter the Grail Quest legends and esoteric artwork of the "underground stream".

On the one hand, there were the Albigenian tales of Swan Princes, Dragon Queens and Elf Maidens, comprising the lore of the forgotten Bloodline and the Lost Bride, wherein knights and chivalric champions battled against all odds to preserve the sacred heritage of the Holy Grail. In these stories, there were wizards of the Druidic school and wise hermits to guide the knights upon their journeys and missions. But nowhere in these tales of enchantment did a gallant priest or bishop ever ride to the aid of a damsel in distress, for the Church was, in practice, the adversary.

To be continued in the next issue of NEXUS...

About the Speaker:

Sir Laurence Gardner, Kt St Gm, KCD, KT St A, is an internationally known sovereign and chivalric genealogist. He holds the position of Prior of the Celtic Church of the Sacred Kindred of Saint Columba, and is distinguished as Le Chevalier Labhrán de Saint Germain and Preceptor of the Knights Templars of Saint Anthony. Sir Laurence is also a Presidential Attaché to the European Council of Princes (a constitutional advisory body established in 1946), and Chancellor of the Imperial and Royal Court of the Dragon Sovereignty. He is formally attached to the Noble Household Guard of the Royal House of Stuart, founded at St Germain-en-Laye in 1692, is the Jacobite Historiographer Royal by Appointment, and is a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland.

Editor's Notes:

- Correspondence for Sir Laurence Gardner should be sent to him care of his postal address: Columba House, PO Box 20, Tiverton EX16 5YP, UK.
- Sir Laurence Gardner's first book, *Bloodline of the Holy Grail: The Hidden Lineage of Jesus Revealed*, was published by Element Books in 1996 (ISBN 1-85230-870-2 h/c), and is available in paperback (ISBN 1-86204-152-0). The second book in his Grail Bloodline series is *Genesis of the Grail Kings: The Pendragon Legacy of Adam and Eve*, published by Bantam Press/Random House in 1999 (ISBN 0-593-04430-4).
- Video and audio tapes of Sir Laurence Gardner's presentation at the 1999 NEXUS Conference are now available. Contact your nearest NEXUS office, or e-mail us at <nexus@peg.apc.org> for a quicker reply.